

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOGADI 01674 150724Z

17-12

ACTION FBO-01

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FOR FBO RALSON AND HOOKER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ABLD PFOR SO US

SUBJ: EMBASSY COMPOUND: CONVERSATION WITH FONMIN

REF: MOGADISCIO 1655

1. SUMMARY: FONMIN CALLED ME IN TO CONVEY PRESIDENT SIAD'S REQUEST THAT USG FORGIVE TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLAR SETTLEMENT FROM EARLIER STAGE OF EMBASSY COMPOUND PROJECT. HE SAID HE WOULD ON NOVEMBER 17 GIVE ME REASONS FOR VALLEJO EXPULSION, WHICH HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH PROJECT AND POSSIBLY RESULT OF "LACK OF COHESION" WITHIN GSDR. AT THAT TIME HE WOULD ALSO TELL ME IF NEW GSDR REGULATIONS ON DIPLOMATIC BUILDING AND LAND HOLDING WOULD AFFECT US PROJECT. END SUMMARY.

2. FONMIN OPENED CONVERSATION BY ASSERTING THAT ALI SHEIKH HAD BEEN UNABLE TO FULFILL HIS EARLIER CONTRACT DUE TO FACTORS OVER WHICH HE HAD NO CONTROL, SUCH AS 1967 MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT. FONMIN RECALLED THAT ABOUT A YEAR AGO HE HAD THEREFORE ASKED EMBASSY WHETHER USG COULD FORGIVE THE TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLAR PENALTY LEVIED AGAINST ALI SHEIKH. HE WAS NOW INSTRUCTED TO CONVEY REQUEST TO THIS EFFECT FROM PRESIDENT SIAD. SUCH A REQUEST COULD NOT BE "GOVERNMENTAL" BUT IT DID COME FROM THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF.

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PAGE 02 MOGADI 01674 150724Z

3. I SAID I FELT HALF-FINISHED STATE OF EMBASSY COMPOUND WAS

SYMBOL OF EARLIER, MORE DIFFICULT STAGE OF US RELATIONS WITH GSDR. I NOTED THAT CHARGE HAD TOLD PRESIDENT SIAD LAST SUMMER THAT WE PLANNED TO COMPLETE SOME OF BUILDINGS ON COMPOUND AND PRESIDENT SIAD HAD STATED THAT HE HAD NO OBJECTION TO THIS. HOWEVER, FACT THAT PROJECT SUPERVISOR HAD JUST BEEN REFUSED RESIDENT PERMIT AND TOLD TO LEAVE WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS RAISED QUESTION IN OUR MIND AS TO WHETHER GSDR WANTED USG TO PROCEED WITH PROJECT. VALLEJO HAD LONG EXPERIENCE WITH PROJECT AND HIS PARTICIPATION WOULD BE EXTREMELY USEFUL TO US. THEREFORE, I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IF HE COULD BE PERMITTED TO RETURN TO SOMALIA.

4. I SAID I UNDERSTOOD THAT TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLAR SETTLEMENT WAS NEGOTIATED COMPROMISE FIGURE WHICH WAS MUCH LESS THAN INITIAL US CLAIM. WE THOUGHT ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURES IN SOMALIA TO COMPLETE PROJECT COULD REACH HALF A MILLION DOLLARS AND WOULD BE OF CONSIDERABLE ASSISTANCE TO ALI SHEIKH IN MEETING HIS DEBTS. OUR PLANS FOR RENEWED WORK ON THE PROJECT HAD BEEN MADE ON BASIS OF USING THE TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS. I WOULD HOWEVER FORWARD PRESIDENT'S REQUEST AS CONVEYED BY FONMIN TO MY GOVERNMENT.

5. FONMIN SAID PRESENT HALF-FINISHED STATE OF COMPOUND "PAINED" HIM. HE WOULD TELL ME OFFICIALLY AND "ON HIS WORD OF HONOR" THAT VALLEJO EXPULSION WAS NOT IN ANY WAY CONNECTED WITH THE PROJECT. USG HAD RIGHT TO KNOW REASONS FOR VALLEJO EXPULSION AND HE WOULD INFORM ME OF THESE ON NOVEMBER 17. THERE HAD PERHAPS BEEN "SOME LACK OF COHESION" WITHIN SOMALI GOVERNMENT.

6. FONMIN SAID SRC HAD AUTHORIZED HIM AND MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS TO TAKE FINAL DECISIONS ON RULES FOR DIPLOMATIC BUILDING AND LAND HOLDING. HE WAS NOT SURE WHETHER THESE NEW REGULATIONS WOULD HAVE ANY BEARING ON US PROJECT, WHICH OF COURSE HAD BEEN IN TRAIN FOR SEVERAL YEARS. I INTERJECTED THAT THIS WAS OF COURSE CORRECT AND THAT WE HAD ALREADY MADE SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENT IN PROJECT ON BASIS OF EARLIER AGREEMENTS. FONMIN SAID HE WOULD GIVE ME GSDR POSITION ON THIS POINT ON NOVEMBER 17.

7. COMMENT: FONMIN'S REFERENCE TO "LACK OF COHESION" HAS OPENED VERY SLIGHT POSSIBILITY THAT VALLEJO MIGHT BE PERMITTED TO RELIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MOGADI 01674 150724Z

TURN. WHAT HE TELLS ME NOVEMBER 17 (JUST BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR OAU MINISTERS' MEETING IN ADDIS) ON THIS POINT AND "NEW REGULATIONS, SHOULD GIVE US BETTER IDEA AS TO WHERE WE SHOULD GO FROM HERE. KIRK

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